

THE DECEMBER MAGAZINES.

Turner Brothers & Co. send us Harper's Magazine for December, which has the following list of articles:— "Frederick the Great," illustrated; "Beast, Bird, and Fish," illustrated; "A Passing Wish;" "The Fisherman's Daughter;" "Dolly;" "The University Rowing Match;" "Illustrated;" "A Brave Lady;" "Illustrated;" "My Enemy's Daughter," concluded; "A Mistake;" "Horse Taming in Hawaii;" "Genealogical Councils;" "The Old Fairy Joanna;" "Border Reminiscences;" "By the Wayside;" "In Clover;" "Editor's Easy Chair;" "Editor's Literary Record;" "Editor's Scientific Record;" "Editor's Historical Record;" "Editor's Drawer."

The feature of this number of the magazine is the elaborate and comprehensive paper on "Ecumenical Councils," from which we quote the following account of the Council of Nice:— At the splendid city of Nice, in Bithynia, in the year 325, assembled the first of those great Ecumenical Councils whose decrees have so often controlled the destiny of Christianity and of mankind. It was an occasion of triumph and fond congratulations, for the Christian Church had just risen up from a period of unexampled humiliation and suffering to rule over the Roman world. For nearly three centuries since the death of their Divine Head his pious disciples had toiled in purity and love, persecuted or scorned by the dominant pagans, for the conversion of the human race; and the hands of his persistent missionaries had sealed with innumerable martyrs and ceaseless woes the final triumph of their faith. Yet never in all its early history had the Christian Church seemed so near its perfect extinction as in the universal persecution of Diocletian and his Caesars, when the pagan rulers could boast with an appearance of truth that they had extirpated the hated sect with fire and sword. In the year 304, except in Gaul, every Christian temple lay in ruins, and the terrified worshippers no longer ventured to meet in their sacred assemblies; the holy books had been burned, the church property confiscated by the pagan magistrates, the church members had perished in fearful tortures, or fled for safety to the savage wilderness; and throughout the Roman world no man dared openly to call himself a Christian.

Gradually, with the slow prevalence of Constantine the Great, as his victorious legions passed steadily onward from Gaul to Italy, and from Italy to Syria, the maimed and bleeding victims of persecution came out from their hiding-places, and bishops and people, purified by suffering, celebrated once more their holy rites in renewed simplicity and faith. Yet it was not until the year preceding the first Ecumenical Council that the Eastern Christians had ceased to be roasted over slow fires, lacerated with iron hooks, or mutilated with fatal tortures; and Lactantius, a contemporary, could point to the ruins of a city in Phrygia whose whole population had been burned to ashes because they refused to sacrifice to Jupiter and Juno. And now, by a strange and sudden revolution, the martyr bishops and presbyters had been summoned from their distant retreats in the monasteries of the Thaid or the sands of Arabia, from Africa or Gaul, to cross the dangerous seas, the inclement mountains, and to meet in a general synod at Nicea, to legislate for the Christian world. We may well conceive the joy and triumph of these holy fathers as they heard the glad news of the final victory of the faith, and hastened in long and painful journeys to unite in fond congratulations in their solemn assembly, as they looked for the first time upon each other's faces and saw the wounds inflicted by the persecutor's hand; as they gazed on the blinded eyes, the torn members, the emaciated frames; as they encountered at every step men whose fame for piety, genius, and learning was renowned from Antioch to Cordova; or studied with grateful interest the form and features of the imperial catechumen, who, although the lowest in rank of all the church dignitaries, had made Christianity the ruling faith from Britain to the Arabian Sea.

Nice or Nicaea, a fair and populous Greek city of Asia Minor, had been appointed by Constantine as the place of meeting for the council probably because the fine roads that centred from various directions in its market-place offered an easy access to the pilgrims of the East. The city stood—its ruins still stand—on the shores of Lake Ascania, not far from the Mediterranean Sea, and on the way to the plains of Troy; it had been adorned with fine buildings by the kings of Bithynia, and enriched by the Roman emperors; in after ages it was shaken by a great earthquake just after the council had dissolved; it became the prey successively of the Saracens, the Turk, and the Crusaders; and when a modern traveller visited its site to gaze on the scene where Athanasius had ravished pious ears by his youthful eloquence, and where Constantine had assembled the Christian world, he found only a waste of ruins in the midst of the ancient walls. The lake was still there; the fragments of aqueducts, theatres, temples. A village of a few hundred houses, supported chiefly by the culture of the mulberry tree, sheltered beneath its ruined walls; and an ill-built Greek church, of crumbling brick work and modern architecture, was pointed out to the traveller as the place where had met, nearly fifteen centuries before, the Council of Nice.

The bishops, in number three hundred and eighteen, together with many priests and other officials, assembled promptly at the call of the Emperor, and in June, 325, met in a basilica or public hall in the centre of the city. Few particulars are preserved of the proceedings of the great council, and we are forced to gather from the allusions of the historians a general conception of its character. Yet we know that it was the purest, the wisest, as well as the first, of all the sacred synods; that its members, tested in affliction and humbled by persecution, preserved much of the grace and gentleness of the Apostolic age; that no fierce anathemas, like those that fell from the lips of the papal bishops of Trent or Constance, defiled those of Hosius or Eusebius; that the pagan doctrine of persecuting had not yet been introduced, together with the pagan ritual into the Christian Church; that no vain superstitions were incanted, and no cruel deeds enjoined; that no Huss or Jerome of Prague died at the stake to gratify the hate of a dominant sect, and that no Luther or Calvin was shut out by the dread of a similar fate from sharing in the earliest council of the Christian world. The proceedings went on with dignity and moderation, and men of various shades of opinion, but of equal purity of life, were heard with attention and respect; the rules of the Roman Senate were probably imitated in the Christian assembly; the Emperor opened the council in a speech inculcating moderation,

and an era of benevolence and love seemed about to open upon the triumphant Church. In the town-hall at Nice, seated probably upon rows of benches that ran around the room, were seen the representative Christians of an age of comparative purity, and the first meeting of these holy men must have formed a scene of touching interest. The martyrs who had scarcely escaped with life from the tortures of the pagans stood in the first rank in the veneration of the assembly; and when Paphnutius, a bishop of the Thebaid, entered the hall, dragging a disabled limb which had been severed while he worked in the mines, and turned upon the bystanders his sightless eyes—or when Paul, bishop of Neocaesarea, raised in blessing his hand maimed by the fire, a thrill of sympathy and love stirred the throng as they gazed on the consecrated wounds. The solitary, whose strange austerities had filled the Christian world with wonder, attracted an equal attention. From the desert borders of Persia and Mesopotamia, where he had lived for years on vegetables and wild fruits, came James of Nisibis, the modern Baptist, whose life was known by his raiment of goats or camels' hair; and near him was the Bishop of Heraclea, a faithful follower of the ascetic rule, the author of the monastic rule. There, too, was the gentle Spiridon, the shepherd-bishop of Cyprus, who still kept his flock after he had won a diocese, and who, when robbers came to steal his sheep, said, "Why did you not take the trouble to ask for them, and I would have given them to you?" And there was the tender-hearted St. Nicholas, the friend of little children, whose name is still a symbol of joy to those he loved. There, too, were men of rare genius and learning, who had studied in the famous schools of Athens or Alexandria, whose writings and whose eloquence had aroused the bitterest hatred of the pagans, and who were betrayed by their contemporaries to have rivalled and outdone the highest efforts of the heathen mind. Chief among these men of intellect was the young presbyter Athanasius, and it was to him that the Council of Nice was to owe its most important influence on mankind. The enthusiasm of Athanasius was tempered by the prudence of Hosius, the Trinitarian bishop of Cordova, and by the somewhat latitudinarian liberality of Eusebius of Caesarea; and these two able men, both close friends of the Emperor Constantine, probably guided the council to moderation and peace. Sylvester, bishop of Rome, too feeble to bear the fatigues of the journey, sent two priests to represent him in the synod. Eight bishops of renown from the West sat with their Eastern brethren, and in the crowded assembly were noticed a Persian and a Goth, the representatives of the barbarians. A strange diversity of language and of accent prevailed in the various deputations, and a day of Pentecost seemed once more to have dawned upon the Church. In the upper end of the hall, after all had taken their places, a golden chair was seen below the seats of the bishops, which was still vacant. At length a man of tall and noble figure entered. His head was modestly bent to the ground; his countenance must have borne traces of contrition and weep. He advanced slowly up the hall, between the assembled bishops, and having obtained their permission, seated himself in the golden chair. It was Constantine, the head of the Church.

A tragic interest must ever hang over the career of the first Christian emperor, whose private griefs seem to have more than counterbalanced the uninterrupted successes of his public life. In his youth Constantine had married Minervina, a maiden of obscure origin and low rank, but who to her devoted and constant lover seemed no doubt the first and fairest of women. Their only son, Crispus, educated by the learned and wise Lactantius, grew up an amiable, exemplary young man, and fought bravely by his father's side in the battle that made Constantine the master of the world. But Constantine had now married a second time, for ambition rather than love, Fausta, the daughter of the cruel Emperor Maximian; and his high-born wife, who had three sons, looked with jealousy upon the rising virtues and renown of the amiable Crispus. She taught her husband to believe that his eldest son had conspired against his life and his crown. Already, when Constantine summoned the council at Nice, his mind was tortured by suspicion of one whom he perhaps loved with strong affection. He had perhaps resolved upon the death of Crispus; and he felt with shame, if not contrition, his own unworthiness as he entered the Christian assembly. Soon after the dissolution of the Council the tragedy of the palace began (326) by the execution of Crispus, by the orders of his father, together with his young cousin, Licinius, the son of Constantine's sister, and a large number of their friends. The guilty arts of Fausta, however, according to the Greek historians, were soon discovered and revealed to the Emperor by his Christian mother, Helena. He was filled with a boundless remorse. The wretched Empress was put to death; and the close of Constantine's life was passed in a vain effort to obtain the forgiveness of his own conscience and of Heaven. But when Constantine entered the Council of Nice his life was still comparatively spotless. He was believed to have inherited all the virtues of his excellent father and pious mother. To the simple and holy men who now for the first time looked upon their preserver as he modestly besought instead of commanded their attention, he must have seemed, in his humility and his grandeur, half divine. But lately his single arm had rescued them from the jaws of a horrible death. He had saved the Church from its sorrows, and published the Gospel to mankind. He was the most powerful monarch the world had ever known, and his empire spread from the Granipian Hills to the ridge of the Atlas, from the Atlantic to the Caspian Sea. He was the invincible conqueror, the hero of his age; yet now monks and solitary heard him profess himself their inferior, a modest catechumen, and urge upon his Christian brethren harmony and union. A miracle, too—the most direct interference from above since the conversion of St. Paul—had thrown around Constantine a mysterious charm; and probably few among the assembled bishops had heard of the cross of light that had outshone the sun at noonday, of the inscription in the skies, and of the perpetual victory promised to their imperial head. When, therefore, Constantine addressed the council, he was heard with awe and fond attention. His Christian sentiments controlled the assembly, and he decided, perhaps against his own convictions, the opinions of future ages. The council had been summoned by the Emperor to determine the doctrine of the Church. Heresy was already abundant and prolific. The opinions of Christians seemed to vary according to their origin or nationality. But the acute and active intellect of the Greeks, ever busy with the deeper inquiries of philosophy and eager for novelty, had poured forth a profusion of strange speculations which alarmed or

embarrassed the duller Latins. Rome, cold and unimaginative, had been long accustomed to receive its abstract doctrines from the East, but it seemed quite time that these principles of faith should be accurately defined. Heresies of the wildest extravagance were widely popular. The Gnostics, or the superior minds, had covered the plain outline of the Scriptures with Platonic commentaries; the theory of cons and of an eternal wisdom seemed about to supplant the teachings of Paul. Among the wildest of the early sectaries were the Ophites or snake-worshippers, who adored the eternal wisdom as incarnate in the form of a snake; and who, at the celebration of the sacred table, suffered a serpent to crawl over the elements, and to be devoutly kissed by the superstitious Christians. The Sethites adored Seth as the Messiah; the Cainites celebrated Judas Iscariot as the prince of the Apostles; Manes introduced from the fire-worship of the Persians a theory of the conflict of light and darkness, in which Christ contended as the Lord of Light against the demons of the night; and Montanus boldly declared that he was superior in morality to Christ the Messiah and his Apostles, and was vigorously sustained by the austere Tertullian. Yet these vain fancies might have been suffered to die in neglect; it was a still more vital controversy that called forth the assembly at Nice. This was no less than the nature of the Deity. What did the Scriptures tell us of that Divine Being who was the author of Christianity, and on whom for endless ages the destiny of the Church was to rest? The Christian world was divided into two fiercely contending parties. On one side stood Rome, Alexandria, and the East; on the other Arins, many of the Eastern bishops, and the heretic Constantine himself. It is plain, therefore, that the Emperor was sincere in his profession of humility and submission, since he suffered the council to determine the controversy uninfluenced by superior power.

A striking simplicity marked the proceedings of the first council. Hosius, Bishop of Cordova, presided, the only representative of Spain, Gaul, and Britain. A prelate opened the meeting with a short address, a hymn was sung, then Constantine delivered his well-timed speech on harmony, and the general debate began. It was conducted always with vigor, sometimes with rude asperity; but when the war of recrimination rose too high, the Emperor, who seems to have attended the sittings regularly, would interpose and calm the strife by soothing words. The question of clerical marriages was discussed, and it was determined, by the arguments of Paphnutius, the Egyptian ascetic, that the lower orders should be allowed to marry. The jurisdiction of the bishops was defined; all were allowed to be equal; but Rome, Antioch, and Alexandria, the chief cities of the empire before Constantine, were built, held each a certain supremacy. The primacy of St. Peter was never mentioned; the worship of Mary, Queen of Heaven, was yet unknown; but the earlier form of the Nicene creed was determined, and Arins was condemned. Twenty canons were passed upon by the council, many of which were soon neglected and forgotten; and when, after sitting for two months, the assembly separated, everyone felt that the genius and eloquence of Athanasius had controlled both Emperor and Church.

Before parting from his Christian brothers—his "beloved," as he was accustomed to call them—Constantine entertained the council at a splendid banquet, and spread before them the richest wines and the rarest viands of the East. The unlettered soldier probably shone better in his costly entertainment than in debate, where his indifferent Latin and broken Greek must have awakened a smile on the grave faces of his learned brothers. Here he could flatter and caress with easy familiarity; he was a pleasant companion and a winning host; but we are not told whether he was able to persuade James of Nisibis to taste his rare dainties, or to entice the anchorites of Egypt to his costly wine. The bishops and their followers left Nicea charmed with the courtesy and liberality of their master. He had paid all their expenses, and maintained them with elegance at Nicea, had descended to call them brothers, and had sent them home by the public conveyances to spread everywhere the glad news that an era of peace and union awaited the triumphant Church.

Happy delusion! But it was rudely dissipated. From Constantine himself came the fatal blow that filled all Christendom with a perpetual unrest. It was the Emperor who corrupted the Church he had seemed to save. Soon after the council that dark shadow fell upon Constantine's life which was noticed by pagan and Christian observers, and he was pointed out by men as a pariah whose sin was inexpiable. The pagan Zosimus represents him as asking the priests of the ancient faith whether his offense could ever be atoned for by his lustrations, and to have been told that for him there was no hope; but that the Christians allured him to their communion by a promise of ample forgiveness. Yet from this period the mind of the great Emperor grew clouded, and the fearful shock of his lost happiness seems to have deadened his once vigorous faculties. He became a tyrant, made and unmade bishops at will, and persecuted all those who had opposed the doctrines of Arins. The Church became a State establishment, and all the ills that flow from that unnatural union fell upon the hapless Christians. Pride, luxury, and license distinguished the haughty bishops, who ruled like princes over their vast domains, and who imitated the Emperor in persecuting, with relentless vigor, all who differed from them in faith. Bishop excommunicated bishop, and fatal anathemas, too dreadful to fall from the lips of feeble and dying men, were the common weapon of religious controversy. They pretended to the right of consigning to eternal woe the souls of the hapless dissidents. They brought bloodshed and murder into the controversies of the Church. Formalism succeeded a living faith, and Religion fled from her high station among the rulers of Christendom to find shelter in her native scene among the suffering and the poor. There we may trust she survived, during this mournful period, the light of the peasant's cottage or the anchorite's cell.

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INSURANCE. INCORPORATED 1836. OFFICE OF THE DELAWARE MUTUAL SAFETY INSURANCE COMPANY. PHILADELPHIA, NOVEMBER 10, 1869. The following statement of the affairs of the Company is published in conformity with a provision of the Charter. Premiums received from November 1, 1868, to October 31, 1869: On Marine and Inland Risks, \$948,196.94. On Fire Risks, 101,945.33. Premiums on Policies not marked off November 1, 1869, 49,241.40. \$1,199,383.67. Premiums marked off as earned from November 1, 1868, to October 31, 1869: On Marine and Inland Risks, \$914,210.29. On Fire Risks, 101,945.33. Interest during the same period—Salvages, etc., 114,877.00. \$1,130,932.82. Losses, Expenses, and all during the year as above: Marine and Inland, during the year as above, \$416,100.37. Fire Losses, 94,344.91. Return Premiums, 101,945.33. Re-insurances, 41,277.74. Agency Charges, Advertising, Printing, etc., 64,897.15. Taxes—United States, State, and Municipal, 23,894.64. Expenses, 25,977.78. \$744,538.93. \$416,100.37. ASSETS OF THE COMPANY. November 1, 1869. \$300,000 United States Five Per Cent. Loan; ten-forties, 94,344.91. 100,000 United States Six Per Cent. Loan (lawful money), 107,767.90. 50,000 United States Six Per Cent. Loan (Pennsylvania Railroad guarantee), 60,000.00. 200,000 State of Pennsylvania Six Per Cent. Loan, 213,200.00. 200,000 City of Philadelphia Six Per Cent. Loan (exempt from tax), 200,000.00. 100,000 State of New Jersey Six Per Cent. Loan, 100,000.00. 200,000 Pennsylvania Railroad Second Mortgage Six Per Cent. Bonds, 10,000.00. 25,000 Western Pennsylvania Railroad Mortgage Six Per Cent. Bonds, 20,000.00. 30,000 State of Tennessee Five Per Cent. Loan, 15,000.00. 7,000 State of Tennessee Six Per Cent. Loan, 4,000.00. 12,500 Pennsylvania Railroad Six Per Cent. Loan, 14,000.00. 5,000 North Pennsylvania Railroad Six Per Cent. Loan, 5,000.00. 10,000 Philadelphia and Southern Mail Steamship Company, 100 shares stock, 7,500.00. 240,000 Loans on Real Estate and Mortgages, first issues of City Properties, 290,000.00. \$1,231,500.00 Par. Market value, \$1,236,370.00. Real Estate, 300,000.00. Bills Receivable, 300,000.00. Bonds, 300,000.00. Premiums on Marine Policies, accrued interest and other debts due to the Company, 60,000.00. Stock, Scrip, etc., of sundry Corporations, 27,000.00. Cash in Bank, \$168,217.56. Cash in Drawer, 100,000.00. \$1,621,100.00.

PHILADELPHIA, November 10, 1869. The Board of Directors have this day declared a CASH DIVIDEND OF TEN PER CENT. ON THE CAPITAL STOCK, and SIX PER CENT. INTEREST ON THE BALANCE OF THE COMPANY, payable on and after the 1st of December proximo, free of National and State taxes. They have also declared a SCRIP DIVIDEND OF FIVE PER CENT. ON THE EARNED PROFITS OF THE year ending October 31, 1869, certificate of which will be issued to the parties entitled to the same, on and after the 1st of December proximo, free of National and State taxes. They have also declared, also, that the Scrip Certificates of Profits of the Company for the year ending October 31, 1868, be redeemed in Cash, at the office of the Company, on and after the 1st of December proximo, all interest thereon to cease on that day. By a provision of the Charter all Certificates of Scrip not presented for redemption within five years after public notice that they will be redeemed shall be forfeited and cancelled on the books of the Company. No certificate of profits issued under \$25. By the act of incorporation, "of December proximo, free of National and State taxes, unless otherwise provided." whereof it is evidence."

DIRECTORS. Thomas C. Hand, Samuel E. Stokes, John C. Davis, William G. Houston, John A. Blyden, H. Jones Brooks, James Tracquir, Edward Laforaine, Jacob Rieck, Henry C. Dallett, Jr., Jacob F. Jones, James C. Hand, William O. Ludwig, Joseph P. Egan, Hugh H. Seal, Spencer M. Tivlin, John H. Blyden, George W. Hornadon, A. B. Berger, William C. Houston, D. T. Morgan.

THOMAS C. HAND, President. JOHN C. DAVIS, Vice-President. HENRY LYLBURN, Secretary. HENRY BALL, Assistant Secretary.

IMPERIAL FIRE INSURANCE COMPANY. LONDON. ESTABLISHED 1803. Paid-up Capital and Accumulated Funds, \$8,000,000 IN GOLD. PREVOST & HERRING, Agents. 2 1/4 No. 107 S. THIRD Street, Philadelphia. CHAS. M. PREVOST, CHAS. P. HERRING.

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PAPER HANGINGS. LOOK! LOOK! LOOK!!! WALL PAPER, Linen and Window Shades, Manufactured by the best in the City, at JOHNSON'S, 1015 N. SPRING GARDEN Street, below Eleventh, BRIDGE STREET, and 1015 FEDERAL Street, Olden, New Jersey.

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